NUMB. XI.

The GRUMBLER.

By Squire GIZZARD.

Viri ingentes, ſupraque mortalium naturam, tantorum numinum lege deprehenſâ, & miſerâ hominum mente abſolutâ, in defectibus Stellarum ſcelera aut mortem aliquam ſyderum pavente. Plin. Hiſt. Nat.

From *Friday* April 22. to *Tueſday* April 26. 1715.

I Have all along been a conſtant and an attentive Hearer of Mr. *Whiſton*'s Aſtronomical Lectures; and find it hard to ſay, whether the Pleaſure or the Inſtruction, which I have received from them, be greater: He has the Art of communicating his Knowledge in ſuch familiar Terms, and in ſo natural a Method, that even a Female Audience might learn from him the various Motions and Appearances of the heavenly Bodies. I congratulate him and the reſt of the ingenious Gentlemen, who give up their Lives to great and ſublime Speculations, upon the truth and exactneſs of their Calculations and Predictions as to this remarkable Eclipſe. It is eaſie to foreſee, that their Succeſs in this Particular will awaken the Curioſity of all Men, whoſe Minds are capable of refined and intellectual Pleaſures, and make it faſhionable to become knowing in the ſtupendous Works of the Creation. In the mean time, we wait with Impatience for the Obſervations that will be communicated to the Publick, and the Concluſions that will be drawn from what paſſed in the Fields of Air upon *Friday* laſt.

I ſhould be ſorry to hear, that any of my Countrymen were ſo ſluggiſh, or ſo loſt to Knowledge, as to be engaged in Sleep, or the purſuits of either Gain, Ambition or Pleaſures, at the Hour when ſo extraordinary an Event of Nature was manifeſted on high. How poor, how trivial a Sight is any human Pageantry, compared to what was ſo lately exhibited in the Heavens? Let it never be ſaid, to the diſgrace of Reaſon, that any of the polite Order of Mankind, who run in Crowds to publick Shews and Entertainments, could let ſlip a Sight of ſuch ſuperlative Pomp and Magnificence. What is a Play, an Opera, a gaudy Entry, when it ſtands in competition with a Comet, an Eclipſe, or any other great and extraordinary Appearance, that the Creator of the Univerſe ſhall from time to time preſent to the Eyes of Men?

While the more learned Obſervers of the Stars and Planets are buſy in preparing their Diſcoveries for the Preſs, I ſhall entertain my Friends with the more obvious, and perhaps not leſs amuſing Face of Things, as they were repreſented to me by an ingenious Gentleman, whoſe Imagination is ſo delicate as to be ſtrongly affected with Objects, eſpecially when they are new and uncommon. He came to Town on *Saturday* from *Greenwich*, and expreſſed himſelf in the Evening at *Button*'s, to me and two more of his Friends, in the following manner.

'When the dark Body of the Moon had performed its Progreſs, ſo far as to place it ſelf directly between us and the Sun, and the Rays of Light were in a manner totally intercepted, there was ſuch a ſolemn and univerſal Gloom ſpread over the Heavens and the Earth, as ſtruck the Eye of the Beholder with a pleaſing Dread. 'There-

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'Thereupon the Stars began to appear; the 'Winds ceas'd to blow; the Clouds ſtood moti-'onleſs; there was a ſudden ſtillneſs in the Air; 'and it ſeemed, as if the Creator of the World 'was about to ſpeak ſomething of Importance to 'his Creatures. The Mountains, the Fields, the 'Floods, the Foreſts, and the Piles of Buildings, 'looked like the Landskip of a Night-Piece ima-'ged out by ſome Angel of a ſuperiour Skill in 'Painting. The Source of Heat, as well as Light, 'was ſhut up; and my Spirits were ſeized at 'once with Chillneſs. The mute, and the very 'inanimate Species felt the mighty Change. The 'Deer ran to and fro diſtracted with Fear and A-'mazement: The Horſes and the Cows lay down 'and couched upon the Graſs: The Beaſts of 'Prey, we may ſuppoſe, refuged themſelves 'within their Dens: The Hares haſtened to their 'Thickets, and the Rabbets hid themſelves in 'their Burroughs: The Ravens urged their flight 'towards their Neſts: The Bats fled about in 'the Dusk, and the Owl was heard to cry: The 'Flowers of the Field folded up their Leaves, 'and the Daiſies were all cloſed. So remarkable 'and ſo general were the effects of this ſhort 'interval of Darkneſs, this momentary Night in 'the full Day, till the Light broke forth again, 'and reſtored Gladneſs to the whole Creation.

As it is one of my principal Amuſements, to pry into the Characters and Manners of Men and Women from the higheſt to the loweſt, I had planted my Spies in different Stations in and about *London*, to obſerve and give me notice of what ſhould paſs before, during, and after the Eclipſe. I am ſatisfied of their Diligence from the following Particulars, which they brought me in.

The *Jacobites*, in a certain Coffee-Houſe, where they are permitted by an old Woman, to talk Treaſon for a Penny a Head, have for this Month prognoſticated an Invaſion. Nine Years hence there will be another Eclipſe to revive their Hopes.

A Stock-Jobber, who had ſold all his Stock out of a Pannick upon *Thurſday*, was found buying a Rope upon *Saturday*, by a Friend, who prevented him from carrying the Jeſt too far.

The Aſtrologers and Fortune-tellers promiſe themſelves a plentiful Crop of Fools of both Sexes this Summer, from the Reputation their Ignorance is like to gain by the exact Calculations of the truly Learned.

A Set of young Ladies, who think themſelves liable to the Influence of the Moon, ſent for a Surgeon *Thurſday* Evening to breathe a Vein, by way of Prevention of they knew not what.

A Waterman of more than ordinary Sagacity, who happened to be above Bridge during the whole time of the Eclipſe, gathered a Crowd of Boats about him, to ſhew the Sun and the Moon fighting; and put the whole Aſſembly in a fright during the Combat.

When the Sun was quite darkened, ſeveral Virgins fainted in the Arms of their Lovers.

There was an univerſal Silence among the Herb-Women in *Covent-Garden*, and the Oyſter-Women at *Billingſgate*, which was never known before at that time of Day.

Corinna, who was never ſo cruel as to refuſe a pretty Fellow, made a deſperate Vow of Chaſtity, and kept it very religiouſly for the ſpace of three Minutes and thirty five Seconds.

My Brother *Tom* had his Pocket picked in the very critical Minutes of Darkneſs.

October Dick, who had plyed his Bottle cloſe from Ten at Night, coming out of the Tavern, as he reeled along, called out for a Link betwixt Nine and Ten in the Morning.

As the Hearts of the People were manifeſtly dejected throughout this populous City, when the Sun ſeemed quite over-powered by the Moon; ſo immediately upon the firſt ſpringing of the Rays of Light, Joy flaſh'd in their Countenances, and they could not refrain from ſaluting the Sun with a loud Huzza.

From theſe Occurrences (to which I might add as many more of the like Nature) we may ſee, what puſillanimous and ridiculous Creatures we are upon any extraordinary Event, when bred up in Prejudice and Ignorance. My Countrymen by this time are all of them ſenſible, *They were more affrighted than hurt*, as the Proverb ſays.

I muſt acquaint my Friend Mr. *Briſk*, that I do not take it kindly of him, that he ſhould neglect meeting me upon *Eaſter-Monday*, as I had appointed. However, to ſhew him how inclinable I am to enter into a farther Correſpondence with him, I ſhall Print his ſecond ſhort Epiſtle, which I received laſt Night.

Honeſt GRUM,

'YOU know *Diogenes*, the Prince of *Grum-'blers*, was very gruff with *Alexander* for 'ſtanding betwixt him and the Sun. If you are 'of the true Breed, I expect on *Tueſday* next to 'hear you reprimand the Moon for what ſhe did 'on *Friday*, to the prejudice of Thouſands as ſurly 'as your ſelf.

Yours, in haſte

BARNABY BRISK.

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